

SUBSTANCE 2

BY PROFESSORS RONALD R. VOLKMER ('68) AND LAWRENCE RAFUL



For the second year in a row, two law school professors took students and others to the Creighton Center in Santiago, Dominican Republic for an eight day spring break filled with legal education, community service, prayer and fellowship. Professors Volkmer and Raful were joined by six Creighton law students, CU Law alum Judge Mary Likes ('64) and Professor Raful's middle daughter, Anna. Like last year, they stayed at Creighton's ILAC center in Santiago, the country's second largest city. One difference from last year, however, was the addition of an orientation program before the trip, which included discussions about Dominican history, culture, and the religious and spiritual dimensions of an American visiting a Third World country.

The group spent two days finishing the construction of a playground (started the previous year) in Cienfuegos, the poorest section of Santiago. When they had finished, they were surrounded by children, teachers and the principal of the neighborhood elementary school, and the kids presented the group with thanks, songs, speeches and a plaque. The group also visited and met with leaders of Batay Libertad, a migrant farm worker camp for Haitian workers, and they spent a half a day at the "Zona Franca", the free trade zone where many types of American clothes are assembled by hand in large factories.

The group spent a full day in the capitol, Santo Domingo. They met the President (the Chief Justice) of the Dominican Supreme Court, members of the Court of Appeals, and the new Attorney General as well. The students and professors had a chance to meet with and ask questions of one of the leading members of the Dominican legislature, and one of the highlights was meeting with a trial judge who had recently become the center of controversy for overturning earlier interpretations which limited the civil rights of Haitian farm workers. And the students finished their day with a visit to the Cathedral in Santo Domingo, the oldest church in the Western Hemisphere.

There are even more stories to tell about this second successful trip, but some things are certain: the students will never forget the look on the children's faces when they sat on swing sets for the first time, as well as the look on the children's faces in the Batay who have nothing and are victims of poverty and discrimination; the feeling of praying in a church built in 1532, and saying Mass and receiving communion on a beautiful beach at sunset; and the fellowship we experienced with each other, as well as the experience of making new friends in a place so much different than ours.